



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

of the beneficial and harmful tendencies of competition, of the relations of economic activity to the other and higher forms of human effort, make this a very suggestive work. Its views in their practical outcome are substantially in harmony with those of Schäffle. Both, though from different standpoints, emphasize the reaction against the narrow and materialistic doctrines of the Manchester school.

H. L. OSGOOD.

American Statesmen. The Life of Henry Clay. By CARL SCHURZ. Boston, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1887. — 2 vols., 12mo, 807 pp.

We have in this life of Henry Clay a biography of one of the most distinguished of American statesmen, and a political history of the United States for the first half of the nineteenth century. In each of these important and difficult undertakings, Mr. Schurz has been eminently successful. Indeed, it is not too much to say that, for the period covered, we have no other book which equals or begins to equal this life of Henry Clay as an introduction to the study of American politics. The tone throughout is scholarly, unpartisan and morally wholesome. Its standpoint is American, but so elevated as not to permit the reader to lose sight of the rest of the world. The art is admirable, the writer is fully master of his material, and in his use of it shows that he possesses in a high degree the trained literary instinct. The result is lucidity. This is apparent everywhere. The division into chapters and their titles reveal it, but its best expression is found in the accounts of critical situations like those which led to the compromises of 1820, 1833, and 1850. There is here nothing of the distortion and obscurity which characterizes the work of the partisan. In the treatment of the slavery controversy, and in the account of the bank struggle, the same nice sense of proportion and the same felicity of statement are noticeable.

The writer does not by any means confine himself to mere narrative. In the chapter on the compromise of 1820, he asks "whether those who accommodated the Missouri quarrel really did a good service to their country"; and, after a luminous discussion of the evils of the compromise, and of the dangers of a refusal to compromise, reaches the conclusion that

An attempt by the South, or by the larger part of it, to dissolve the Union would therefore, at that time, have been likely to succeed. There would probably have been no armed collision about the dissolution itself, but a prospect of complicated quarrels and wars afterwards about the property formerly held in common, and perhaps about other matters of disagreement. A reunion might possibly have followed after a sad experience of separation. But that result would have had to be evolved from long and

confused conflicts, and the future would at best have been dark and uncertain. Even in the event of reunion, the fatal principle of secession at will, once recognized, would have passed into the new arrangement.

In view of all this, it seemed good statesmanship to hold the Union together by a compromise, and to adjourn the final and decisive struggle on the slavery question to a time when the Union feeling should be strong and determined enough to maintain the integrity of the Republic, if necessary, by force of arms, and when the free states should be so superior in men and means to the slave-holding section as to make the result certain. [Volume i, page 199.]

This is speculation, but of a kind through which history renders its highest services to the student, the citizen and the statesman.

In spite of his general soundness the writer now and then takes a questionable position. One such is found in the chapter entitled "Secretary of State." After mentioning the negotiations with Great Britain for the surrender of slaves escaping into Canada, Mr. Schurz comments as follows :

And this happened under the administration of John Quincy Adams ; the instructions were signed by Henry Clay, and the proposition was laid before the British government by Albert Gallatin ! [Volume i, p. 301.]

Then follows an apology for Clay which confesses that his disposition opposed, while, in general, his conduct favored slavery. For this contradiction, the explanation offered is, the character of the period :

We can now scarcely appreciate the dread of the consequences of sudden emancipation, the constitutional scruples, the nervous anxiety about the threatened Union, and the vague belief in the efficacy of compromises and palliatives, which animated statesmen of Clay's way of thinking and feeling. [Volume i, page 306.]

It is possible that every element which can properly enter into an explanation of this sort is here present ; but I cannot think the emphasis is rightly distributed. I believe that the decisive consideration which moved Adams and Clay, was the sense of public responsibility. The government which they administered was for the whole Union — for the slave- just as much as for the free-labor section. It follows therefore that in the conduct of foreign affairs they had no more right to overlook or neglect the interests of the South than those of the North. To this regard for the obligations imposed by the sense of public responsibility Mr. Schurz gives no place, unless it be through the phrase "constitutional scruples" ; but this is manifestly inadequate. The point is the more worthy of note because elsewhere, and particularly in the criticism of the Whig party, this motive, which certainly goes far towards justifying apparently censurable conduct, does not seem to receive due consideration.

In the chapter entitled "The Exit of President Jackson," it is said, that

He [President Jackson] had violently interrupted the good constitutional traditions, and had infused into the government and into the whole body politic a spirit of lawlessness which lived after him and of which the demoralizing influence is felt to this day. [Volume ii, pages 109, 110.]

In this view Mr. Schurz has the support of eminent authorities, among others, that of Sumner and von Holst. Still, there is ground for a differing view. There was in Jackson's day a "democratic upheaval" which lifted the masses into power. This movement was a phase of development and therefore of progress. It sought, as does every political revolution, to set aside existing "constitutional traditions" and put in their place a new interpretation of the law, more favorable to the popular aspirations and sense of right. This spirit is not essentially lawless. It rejects what it considers bad law in order to make room for what it considers good law. The first effect of every revolution, the most justifiable not excepted, is demoralization (this even Luther lived to witness and lament); the final effect is to bring law and its interpretation into a truer relationship to the wants of the people, and therefore to create a broader and more durable basis for the development of the law-abiding spirit. If we look at the "democratic upheaval" of Jackson's time in this light, we find ourselves obliged to question the judgment just quoted. The lawlessness was incidental to the movement; it was not of Jackson's creation. His leadership was of that effective kind which secured victory after a comparatively short struggle and thus abridged the period of necessary demoralization. Moreover, in order to be just towards Jackson, it is well to remember that he gained his control over the masses in good part through the very interruption of "the good constitutional traditions" for which he is blamed; and that one use made of this influence was to impress upon his followers that sentiment of devotion to the Union which a generation later contributed, perhaps decisively, to saving the Union.

Turning to the biographical side of the work, one is inclined at first sight to wonder that but twelve out of some eight hundred pages are devoted to the first twenty-one years of Clay's life; but after reading these it would be difficult to point out any important omission. Here as elsewhere the writer has given us only what is really significant. Clay's early education was very imperfect, and he never became in the true sense a student. This fact qualified his success in law and in statesmanship. "He studied only for the occasion, as far as his immediate need went." Cards, company and even his "remarkable gift of speaking" stood in his way.

These tasks robbed him of the hours and of the temper of mind without which the calm gathering of thought required for the mastery of a science is not possible. Moreover it is not improbable that his remarkable gift of speaking, which enabled him to make little tell for much and to outshine men of vastly greater learning, deceived him as to the necessity for laborious study. [Volume i, pages 23, 24.]

As the biography proceeds, the occasional glimpses which we get of Henry Clay outside of his political life are so attractive, that we are tempted to wish that the requirements of the *American Statesmen* series had permitted more freedom in this direction. The story of Clay's public life is calmly told. Praise and blame are freely bestowed, but always in a judicial tone. Indeed, so severely impartial is the writer that those who have felt the spell of Clay's character and eloquence may think him unsympathetic. In general Clay's spirit is approved. His humanity and chivalry, the ardor, purity and breadth of his patriotism, receive distinct, but by no means extravagant, recognition.

On the other hand the political conduct of Clay is often sharply arraigned. He is blamed for his opposition to Monroe, his management of the bank controversy, his treatment of Harrison, his leadership of the Whigs in Tyler's administration, and some features of his course as presidential candidate. There is almost a suggestion of harshness in the words which follow the commendation of Clay's conduct in 1824: "It would hardly have been predicted then that twenty years later he would lose the presidency by an equivocation." [Volume i, page 230.]

Perhaps the passages which best express the writer's general estimate of Clay's political character and influence are the following:

It [Clay's public career] was ruled by the idea that, as the binding together of the states in the Union and the formation of a constitutional government had been accomplished by the compromising of diverse interests, this Union and this constitutional government had to be maintained in the same way; and that every good citizen should consider it his duty, whenever circumstances required it, to sacrifice something, not only of his material advantages, but even of his sentiments and convictions, for the peace and welfare of the common Republic. . . .

Whether what he advocated was wise or unwise, right or wrong, — there was always ringing through his words a fervid plea for his country, a zealous appeal in behalf of the honor and the future greatness and glory of the Republic, or an anxious warning lest the Union, and with it the greatness and glory of the American people, be put in jeopardy. It was a just judgment which he pronounced upon himself when he wrote: "If any one desires to know the leading and paramount object of my public life, the preservation of this Union will furnish him the key." [Volume ii, pages 413, 414.]

ANSON D. MORSE.